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General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

52nd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 November 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Santa Clara Gomes (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Sixth Committee

The Acting President: The General Assembly will consider the reports of the Sixth Committee on agenda items 152 to 166 and 22 (h).

I request the Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Karim Medrek of Morocco, to introduce in one intervention the reports of the Sixth Committee before the General Assembly.

Mr. Medrek (Morocco), Rapporteur of the Sixth Committee, (*spoke in French*): I have the honour today of introducing to the General Assembly the reports of the Sixth Committee on the 16 agenda items allocated to it: items 152 to 166 and sub-item 22 (h).

I call the Assembly's attention to agenda item 152, entitled "Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/57/559. The Committee recommends to the Assembly for adoption the draft resolution contained in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would in particular appeal to all States parties to the Geneva Conventions that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the additional Protocols at the earliest possible date. It calls upon all States that are already parties to Protocol I, or those States not parties, on becoming parties to Protocol I, to make the declaration provided for under article 90 of that Protocol. It also calls upon all States that have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the two Protocols thereto, and to other relevant treaties on international humanitarian law relating to the protection of victims of armed conflict.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 153, entitled "Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/57/560. The draft resolution that the Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 7 of that report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, among other things, strongly condemn acts of violence against diplomatic and consular missions and representatives, as well as against missions, representatives and staff of non-governmental organizations. It would also urge States to take every necessary measure at the national and international levels to prevent such acts of violence and to ensure, with the participation of the United Nations

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as appropriate, that such acts are fully investigated in order to bring offenders to justice. The Sixth Committee adopted that draft resolution without a vote. The Assembly may wish to do the same.

I would now like to draw the Assembly's attention to agenda item 154, entitled "Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/561. The draft resolution that the Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 7 of that report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property, which was established by resolution 55/150, of 12 December 2000, shall be convened from 24 to 28 February 2003 to make a final attempt at consolidating areas of agreement and resolving outstanding issues, with a view to elaborating a generally acceptable instrument based on the draft articles on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property and on the discussions in the Sixth Committee, as well as to recommend a form for the instrument. The Assembly would also request the Ad Hoc Committee to report to it on the outcome of its work at its fifty-eighth session. The Sixth Committee adopted that draft resolution without a vote. I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 155, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fifth session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee on this agenda item is contained in document A/57/562. In paragraph 15 of that report, the Committee recommends four draft resolutions for adoption by the General Assembly.

Under the terms of the first draft resolution, entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fifth session", the General Assembly would, among other things, take note of the report of the Commission on its thirty-fifth session. It would also reaffirm the importance, in particular for developing countries, of the work of the Commission concerned with training and technical assistance in the field of international trade law. The Assembly would also appeal to Governments, the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, organizations, institutions and individuals to support such assistance programmes by the Commission, in particular by making voluntary contributions to the Commission's Trust Fund for Symposia, as well as by providing contributions to the trust fund established to provide travel assistance for developing countries that are members of the Commission. The Assembly would also decide to continue, in the competent Main Committee, its consideration of granting travel assistance to the least developed countries that are members of the Commission, in order to ensure full participation by all Member States in the sessions of the Commission and its working groups.

Under the terms of the operative paragraphs of the second draft resolution, entitled "Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", the General Assembly would express appreciation to the Commission for completing and adopting the Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation, which is contained in the annex to the draft resolution, as well as for preparing the Guide to Enactment and Use of the Model Law. The Assembly would also request the Secretary-General to make every effort to ensure that the Model Law, together with its Guide, become generally known and available to all. Finally, the Assembly would recommend that all States give due consideration to incorporating the Model Law into their national laws.

Under the terms of the operative part of the third draft resolution, entitled "Enhancing coordination in the area of international trade law and strengthening the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", the General Assembly would emphasize the need for higher priority to be given to the work of the Commission. The Assembly would also take note of the fifteenth recommendation contained in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the in-depth evaluation of the programme on legal affairs. It would also request the Secretary-General to consider measures to strengthen the secretariat of the Commission within the bounds of the resources available to the Organization, if possible during the current biennium, and in any case during the 2004-2005 biennium.

Finally, under the terms of the operative paragraphs of the fourth draft resolution, entitled "Enlargement of the membership of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law", the General Assembly would enlarge the membership of the

Commission from 36 to 60 States, with the following distribution of seats among regional groups: 14 seats to the Group of African States, 14 seats to the Group of Asian States, 8 seats to the Group of Eastern European States, 10 seats to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and 14 seats to the Group of Western European and other States. In increasing the Commission's membership, the Assembly would bear in mind the fact that the Commission is a technical body whose composition reflects the specific requirements of the subject matter. Therefore, the regional representation resulting from the increase in membership would not be a precedent for the enlargement of other bodies of the United Nations system. The Assembly would also decide that the 24 additional members would be elected for a term of six years, except as otherwise provided by the draft resolution. The 24 additional members of the Commission would be elected during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and would take office on the first day of the thirty-seventh session of the Commission, in 2004.

The Sixth Committee adopted those four draft resolutions without a vote. It is the hope of the Committee that the Assembly will do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 156, entitled "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-fourth session". The relevant report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/57/563. The draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 8 of that report.

By the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, take note with appreciation of the report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-fourth session. It would also take note of the decision of the Commission to proceed with its work on the topic "International liability for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law", as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/82 of 12 December 2001, and of its decision to include in its programme of work the following topics: "Responsibility of international organizations", "Shared natural resources" and "Fragmentation of international law: difficulties arising from the diversification and expansion of international law".

The General Assembly would reiterate its invitation to Governments to provide information to the Commission regarding State practice on the topic "Unilateral acts of States" and to submit the most relevant national legislation and decisions of domestic courts relevant to diplomatic protection in order to assist the Commission in its work on these topics. The General Assembly would also invite the International Law Commission to continue taking measures to enhance its efficiency and productivity and would encourage the Commission to continue taking cost-saving measures at its future sessions. The General Assembly would further decide that the next session of the International Law Commission shall be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 5 May to 6 June and from 7 July to 8 August 2003.

The draft resolution was adopted without a vote. It is hoped that the General Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 157, "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/57/564 and corrigendum 1. The draft resolution recommended to the Assembly for adoption is contained in paragraph 8 of the report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, endorse recommendations and conclusions of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. It would also express the view that the maintenance of appropriate conditions for the normal work of the delegations and the missions accredited to the United Nations and the observance of their privileges and immunities is an issue of great importance, and request the host country to continue to solve, through negotiations, problems that might arise, and to take all measures necessary to prevent any interference with the functioning of missions.

Moreover, the Assembly would take note of the opinion of the Legal Counsel of the United Nations concerning the Parking Programme for Diplomatic Vehicles; the positions expressed on this issue at the 213th meeting of the Committee, including requests from most speakers to defer implementation of the Parking Programme; and the host country's commitment to maintaining appropriate conditions for the functioning of the delegations and missions accredited to the United Nations in a manner that is fair, non-discriminatory, efficient and consistent with international law.

The Assembly would express its appreciation for the efforts made by the host country, and hope that the

issues raised at the meetings of the Committee will continue to be resolved in a spirit of cooperation and in accordance with international law. Moreover, it would note that during the reporting period the travel controls previously imposed by the host country on staff of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities remained in effect, and request the host country to consider removing such travel controls.

The Assembly would also note that the Committee anticipates that the host country will continue to ensure the issuance, in a timely manner, of entry visas to representatives of Member States, in accordance with applicable agreements, for the purpose of their attending official United Nations meetings.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will be in a position to act likewise.

I now turn to the report of the Sixth Committee concerning agenda item 158, "Establishment of the International Criminal Court". The report is contained in document A/57/565. The draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly is contained in paragraph 10 of the report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, call upon all States that have signed the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to consider ratifying it or acceding to it without delay, and to becoming parties to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court. The Assembly would also welcome the important work accomplished by the Preparatory Commission for the International Criminal Court in the completion of its mandate, and the holding of the first session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute.

In addition, the Assembly would take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the establishment of the International Criminal Court, in particular the indication that the Assembly of States Parties would, inter alia, resume its first session from 3 to 7 February and from 21 to 23 April 2003 and hold its second session from 8 to 12 September 2003; and that the Committee on Budget and Finance would meet from 4 to 8 August 2003. Furthermore, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to undertake the preparations necessary for holding the meetings and to make Secretariat services available to those meetings. The Assembly would further request the Secretary-General to expand the mandate of the trust fund established pursuant to its resolution 51/207 for voluntary contributions towards meeting the costs of participation of the least developed countries in the work of the Assembly of States Parties.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote and the Assembly may wish to do likewise.

I now draw the Assembly's attention to agenda item 159, "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization". The report of the Sixth Committee on this item is contained in document A/57/566. The Sixth Committee recommends for adoption by the General Assembly three draft resolutions, which are contained in paragraph 12 of the report.

By the terms of draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization", the General Assembly would, inter alia, request the Special Committee, at its next session from 7 to 17 April 2003, to continue its consideration of all proposals concerning the question of the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations. The Special Committee would also be requested to continue to consider, on a priority basis, the question of the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter by commencing a substantive debate on all of the related reports of the Secretary-General and the proposals submitted on the question.

By the provisions of draft resolution II, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions", the General Assembly would, inter alia, renew its invitation to the Security Council to consider the establishment of further mechanisms or procedures, as appropriate, for consultations as early as possible under Article 50 of the Charter with third States affected by the application of sanctions under Chapter VII. Moreover, it would invite the Council, its sanctions committees and the Secretariat to take a number of measures including, inter alia, to continue to ensure, as appropriate, that

pre-assessment and ongoing assessment reports contain analyses on the impact of sanctions on third States and on how their negative effects could be mitigated.

Furthermore, the General Assembly would welcome the report of the Secretary-General containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting in 1998 and would take note of the Secretary-General's most recent report, and in particular of his views on the deliberations and main findings of that meeting.

In addition, the Assembly would decide to consider, within the Sixth Committee or a working group of the Committee, at its fifty-eighth session, further progress in the elaboration of effective measures aimed at the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions.

Under the provisions of draft resolution III, entitled, "Prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes", the General Assembly would urge States to make the most effective use of existing procedures and methods for the prevention and settlement of their disputes peacefully, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and would also draw the attention of States to the important roles played by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General in providing early warning and in working for the prevention of disputes and situations which might threaten international peace and security.

Furthermore, the Assembly would urge the continued enhancement of the concrete steps taken by the Secretariat to build and improve the capacity of the United Nations to respond effectively in matters relating to dispute prevention. It would also request the Secretary-General to take such steps as he deems necessary from time to time to encourage States to designate suitably qualified persons for inclusion in the lists of experts in the various mechanisms for dispute settlement.

The Assembly would also remind States that have not yet done so that they may make a declaration under Article 36, paragraph 2, of the Statute of the International Court of Justice with regard to its compulsory jurisdiction in relation to any other State accepting the same obligation, and would encourage them to consider doing so.

The Sixth Committee adopted these three draft resolutions without a vote and hopes that the Assembly will do the same.

I now come to agenda item 160, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". The report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/57/567. The draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 10 of that report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the Assembly would, inter alia, strongly condemn all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomsoever committed. In addition, the Assembly would urge States that have not yet done so to consider, as a matter of priority and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), becoming parties to the relevant conventions and protocols.

The draft resolution would urge States to cooperate with the Secretary-General and with one another, as well as with interested intergovernmental organizations, with a view to ensuring, where appropriate within existing mandates, that technical and other expert advice is provided to those States requiring and requesting assistance in becoming parties to the conventions and protocols previously referred to. The Assembly would also welcome the efforts of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Centre for International Crime Prevention in Vienna to enhance, through its mandate, the capabilities of the United Nations in the prevention of terrorism.

Furthermore, the Assembly would decide that the Ad Hoc Committee established pursuant to resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 would continue to elaborate a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as a matter of urgency, and would continue its efforts to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the elaboration of a draft international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The Ad Hoc Committee would also keep on its agenda the question of convening a high-level conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The Assembly would further decide that the Ad Hoc Committee would meet from 31 March to 2 April 2003 and that work would also continue, if necessary, during

the fifty-eighth session of the Assembly within the framework of a working group of the Sixth Committee.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. It is hoped that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to the report of the Sixth Committee on agenda item 161, entitled "Scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel", contained in document A/57/568 and Corr.1. The draft resolution that the Sixth Committee recommends to the General Assembly for adoption is set out in paragraph 10 of the report.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would, inter alia, recommend that the Secretary-General continue to seek the inclusion of key provisions of the Convention in future, as well as, if necessary, in existing status-of-forces, status-of-mission and host country agreements, mindful of the importance of the timely conclusion of such agreements. It would also recommend that the Secretary-General advise the Security Council or the General Assembly, as appropriate, where in his assessment circumstances would support a declaration of exceptional risk for the purposes of article 1(c)(ii) of the Convention.

In operative paragraph 5, the General Assembly would confirm the Secretary-General's authority to provide information, on the request of a State, on matters of fact relevant to the application of the Convention.

In operative paragraph 6, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to prepare model or standardized provisions for incorporation into the agreements between the United Nations and humanitarian non-governmental organizations or agencies, and if possible to report on progress on this issue before the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee established under resolution 56/89. In the same paragraph, the Secretary-General would also be requested to make available to Member States the names of humanitarian non-governmental organizations or agencies that have concluded agreements with the United Nations.

According to operative paragraph 8, the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee established under resolution 56/89 would be held from 24 to 28 March 2003. The Ad Hoc Committee's mandate, as set out in the same paragraph, would be to continue the discussion on measures to enhance the existing protective legal regime for United Nations and associated personnel. In operative paragraph 9, the Ad Hoc Committee would be requested to submit a report on its work to the General Assembly at the fifty-eighth session.

Finally, in operative paragraph 10, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to it at its fifty-eighth session on the measures taken to implement the resolution.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do likewise.

I now turn to agenda item 162, entitled, "International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings". The report of the Sixth Committee is contained in document A/57/569. The draft decision recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is found in paragraph 14 of that report.

Under the terms of the draft decision, the Assembly would welcome the reports of the Ad Hoc Committee on an International Convention against the Reproductive Cloning of Human Beings, which met in February and March 2002, as well as of the Working Group of the Sixth Committee established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/93 of 12 December 2001, which met in September 2002.

Furthermore, the Assembly would decide to convene a working group of the Sixth Committee during the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly from 29 September to 3 October 2003 in order to continue the work undertaken during the present session of the Assembly. Finally, as is noted in paragraph 12 of the report, the Committee, in adopting the draft decision, decided not to take action on any other proposals. Indeed, the Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote, and it is hoped that the Assembly will do so as well.

I now turn to agenda item 163, "Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/570, and the draft decision recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is found in paragraph 8 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide to defer its consideration of and a decision on the request for observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly to its fifty-eighth session.

The draft decision was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will do the same.

I now draw your attention to agenda item 164 entitled, "Observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/571, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the Partners in Population and Development to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now draw your attention to agenda item 165 entitled, "Observer status for the Asian Development Bank in the General Assembly." The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/572, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the Asian Development Bank to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now turn to agenda item 166 entitled, "Observer status for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in the General Assembly". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/573, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would decide to invite the International Centre for Migration Policy Development to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I now draw your attention to agenda item 22 (h) entitled, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". The relevant report of the Committee is contained in document A/57/574, and the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption is reproduced in paragraph 7 thereof.

Under the terms of the draft resolution entitled "Observer status for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly", the General Assembly would decide to invite the Inter-Parliamentary Union to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. It would also request the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the resolution.

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote, and I hope that the Assembly will be in a position to do the same.

I have thus concluded reading out the list of reports of the Sixth Committee now before this Assembly. Allow me to thank all delegations, and in particular those of the regional group to which Morocco belongs and which gave me this great honour to represent them. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my other colleagues in the bureau for their cooperation and cordiality, as well as the Secretary of the Committee and his close associates for the professionalism and great support that they have shown me throughout.

The President: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Sixth Committee which are before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

Statements will, therefore, be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Sixth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

May I remind members that under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the General Assembly agreed that "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, that is, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to ten minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Sixth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Sixth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise in advance.

I should, therefore, hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Sixth Committee.

Agenda item 152

Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/559)

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report (A/57/559).

The draft resolution was adopted by the Sixth Committee without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/14).

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 152?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 153

Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/560)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/15).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 153?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 154

Convention on jurisdictional immunities of States and their property

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/561)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/16).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 154?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 155

Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fifth session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/562)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the four draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 15 of its report.

Draft resolution I is entitled "Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its thirty-fifth session".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/17).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Model Law on International Commercial Conciliation of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/18).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Enhancing coordination in the area of international trade law and strengthening the secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/19).

The President: Draft resolution IV is entitled "Enlargement of the membership of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution IV without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/20).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 155?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 156

Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-fourth session

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/563)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 9 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/21).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 156?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 157

Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/564 and Corr.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/22).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 157?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 158

Establishment of the International Criminal Court

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/565)

The President: I now call on the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Martinez (United States of America): For the reasons set forth in its statement of 14 October during the consideration of this agenda item by the Sixth Committee, the United States is unable to join in the consensus on the adoption of this draft resolution. We therefore will not participate in the adoption of this draft resolution.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/23).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 158?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 159

Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/566)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 12 of its report.

We turn first to draft resolution I, entitled "Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/24).

The President: Draft resolution II is entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution II without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/25).

The President: Draft resolution III is entitled "Prevention and peaceful settlement of disputes".

The Sixth Committee adopted draft resolution III without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/26).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 159?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 160

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/567)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without at vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/27).

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 160.

Agenda item 161

Scope of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/568 and Corr.1)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 10 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/28).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 161?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 162

International convention against the reproductive cloning of human beings

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/569)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 14 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 57/512).

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United States, who wishes to speak in explanation of position on the decision just adopted.

Mr. Martinez (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join consensus on this procedural decision, which will enable the Sixth Committee to continue discussion of a convention on cloning during the next session of the General Assembly. We note that subparagraph (b) of the decision sets forth the mandate for the next session in neutral terms. The Working Group will continue the work undertaken during this session, which has focused on the scope of a future convention.

The United States and many other Member States support a total ban on human cloning. We are hopeful that future discussions will advance the work on this topic and enable us to begin work on a convention to ban all cloning of human embryos. Although the item has been re-inscribed on the agenda under its current title, this in no way prejudges the outcome of those discussions, especially since many scientists point out that all cloning that creates human embryos is, in effect, reproductive.

Our focus in these discussions has been and remains the elaboration of a comprehensive ban on human cloning. We believe that the growing support for a total ban signals that a course correction is under way and that the trend towards a total ban will forge a clear path towards a convention to prohibit all cloning of human embryos.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 162?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 163

Observer status for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/570)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft decision recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 8 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted (decision 57/513).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 163?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 164

Observer status for Partners in Population and Development in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/571)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/29).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 164?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 165

Observer status for the Asian Development Bank in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/572)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/30).

The President: In accordance with the resolution just adopted, I now give the floor to the observer for the Asian Development Bank.

Mr. Sandilya (Asian Development Bank): I would like, on behalf of the President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Tadao Chino, to thank the General Assembly for adopting the resolution inviting our Bank to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.

We would also like to thank the representative of China for sponsoring the draft resolution, as well as the delegations that sponsored it and the members of the Sixth Committee, which recommended its adoption.

The purpose of the Asian Development Bank is to foster economic growth, development and regional cooperation in the Asian and Pacific region. Our overarching objective is to reduce poverty in our developing member countries. In so doing, we are committed to helping them in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals that were adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000. We believe that strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank will greatly benefit our endeavours, and we look forward very much to working closely with the United Nations family.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 165?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 166

Observer status for the International Centre for Migration Policy Development in the General Assembly

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/573)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report.

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/31).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 166?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 22

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

(h) Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Sixth Committee (A/57/574)

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the

Sixth Committee in paragraph 7 of its report. The draft resolution is entitled "Observer status for the Inter-Parliamentary Union in the General Assembly".

The Sixth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/32).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (h) of agenda item 22. Also, the Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of all the reports of the Sixth Committee before it.

Agenda item 25

Oceans and the law of the sea

Draft resolution (A/57/L.19)

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/57/L.19, entitled "Plenary meetings of the General Assembly on 9 and 10 December 2002 devoted to the consideration of the item entitled 'Oceans and the law of the sea' and to the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the opening for signature of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea".

Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/57/L.19, I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Monaco and Nauru.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/57/L.19.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.19?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 57/33).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 25.

Agenda item 28 (*continued*)

Assistance in mine action

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/430)

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly began its debate on this agenda item at the 51st plenary meeting, on Friday, 15 November 2002.

Mr. Balestra (San Marino): Today, we are addressing an international humanitarian issue that warrants serious concern. At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/57/430), which both recognizes the progress achieved in current mine-action assistance and identifies improvements that should be made in order to continue to effectively tackle a current, yet unfortunately old, problem.

On previous occasions, my delegation has strongly stressed the need to provide continuous assistance to countries crippled by mines, and we have always supported the Ottawa Convention, an instrument that sets a strong and effective universal precedent in condemning the use of mines. Tragically, in the twenty-first century, generations in many parts of the world are being maimed and haunted by past and present conflicts as a result of regime tactics of engaging in warfare through the use of landmines. Political and social instability in various parts of the world further contribute to the problem and continue to victimize defenceless citizens, many of whom are innocent women and children. Landmines are indiscriminate time bombs; their victims are usually not their intended targets, nor do mines detonate only in times of conflict. Currently, more than 70 countries contain 1 million active landmines in unexploded-ordnance sites.

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, while some goals have been met, new challenges have arisen. Assistance in mine action is an important and essential initiative that necessitates continued support. It is a matter of humanitarian concern to which my Government is strongly committed. San Marino is also aware of the fact that landmines will be eradicated, not instantaneously, but through long-standing, effective commitment.

While the Ottawa Convention led to a substantial framework for both banning landmines and assisting countries affected by mines and by other unexploded ordnance, the United Nations — through the engagement of Governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations — must ensure the proper implementation of those commitments. San Marino strongly believes that, in order to attain concrete results in the field of implementation, it is necessary to establish a road map to evaluate progress achieved in implementing the six main objectives identified by the Secretary-General in his report. My Government is convinced that all areas are of equal importance, but we should like to welcome, in particular, the progress achieved in the field of information. The web-based electronic mine information network is an essential instrument to plan and coordinate mine action activities and to increase global awareness of the magnitude of this terrible problem.

As the Secretary-General stresses in his report, it is never too early to start long-term planning in countries at risk. Activities related to mine action should be integrated into the national development reconstruction plans of affected nations. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should continue to play an active role in providing technical support, consolidating their efforts with those of other political and non-political actors.

Despite the small size and the obvious financial limitations of the Government of San Marino, we have recognized the importance of landmine assistance in terms of both political and financial endorsement. Our modest support has taken the form of a financial contribution for the dissemination of information packets in communities threatened by this problem. Education serves as a means of giving people — especially children — who are endangered by landmines a way to protect themselves from this invisible threat. Although that is a step towards a solution, it is far from a complete answer. We strongly believe that international cooperation is the only effective way to reduce the tragic effects of existing landmines and to eradicate this terrible scourge in the future.

The President: Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to request that representatives be good enough to move quietly through the aisles at the end of each statement, or even during statements, as they enter and leave the General Assembly Hall, so as not to disturb the speaker who has the floor. I rely on those present to cooperate in maintaining order and quiet in the Hall, in keeping with the dignity and decorum expected of members of the General Assembly.

Ms. Ognjanovac (Croatia): The Republic of Croatia has direct experience of the disastrous effects of mines and, therefore, attaches special importance to mine action assistance. Croatia believes that the Ottawa Convention has gone a long way towards bringing the goal of a mine-free world just a bit closer to reality. It has opened a forum for discussion among States, forced us to take concrete and legally binding action to destroy all anti-personnel mines, and has given us a place to exchange information and expertise and, in some cases, to provide much-needed assistance.

Croatia actively participates in the work of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines, including through various formal and informal groups that operate within the scope of the Convention. At the Fourth Meeting of States Parties, held in September 2002, Croatia, along with Australia, passed on the co-chairmanship of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction to Romania and Switzerland and wished them every success in the coming year, especially at this crucial time when the first deadlines under article 4 of the Convention are about to expire. Croatia also voiced its appreciation to States parties for their decision to once again appoint it to another two-year mandate of co-rapporteurship/co-chairmanship, this time in the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration.

In regard to Ottawa Convention obligations, Croatia fulfilled its article-4 obligation to destroy its stockpiles on 23 October 2002. The seminar on "Humanitarian mine action: progress under the mine ban treaties", which took place in Dubrovnik at the end of October, was partly an article-6 exercise on international cooperation. The seminar was focused not only on international aspects such as Ottawa Convention implementation, including international and non-governmental organization (NGO) cooperation along those lines, but also on issues such as the development of new methods and technologies for demining, the financing of demining programmes, as well as education and awareness-raising.

Croatia is also working steadily on implementing its national mine action programme. Taking into account the admirable work of its deminers in past

years, and following the completion of recent surveys of suspected mined areas, we can with a fair amount of certainty state that there are about 270 square kilometres of national territory that are known to be mined, mainly along the former lines of demarcation, while a further substantial number of square kilometres of national territory are still marked as suspected of being mined.

We understand the need to have these areas demined as soon as possible, which is why substantial financial resources are allocated by the Croatian Government to the programme annually. Notwithstanding the fact that the majority — some 86 per cent — of the national mine action programme is financed domestically, we once again take this opportunity to thank all donor countries for their generous contributions throughout the past year.

It should also be mentioned that the Croatian Mine Action Centre has been active in helping to develop international mine action standards, mainly in the field of general and humanitarian demining standards and guidelines.

At the Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW Convention), Croatia fully supported proposals for extending the scope of the Convention to internal conflicts by amending article 1 of the Convention, as well as supporting the establishment of an open-ended group of governmental experts, with separate coordinators, to discuss ways and means of addressing the issue of explosive remnants of war and to further explore the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines.

On these specific issues, Croatia distributed a position paper at the second session of the expert group, held in July 2002. In short, on the issue of explosive remnants of war Croatia supports the principle of systematic resolution of this humanitarian problem through the establishment of a legally binding instrument. Even though more work is certainly needed on issues such as definitions of explosive remnants of war, the role of international humanitarian law related to explosive remnants of war and defining whose responsibility it is to warn the civilian population and to clean up explosive remnants of war following a conflict, we believe that the time is ripe for us to proceed with a negotiating mandate on this issue. Clearing explosive remnants of war should be an indisputable humanitarian obligation; therefore, we will support moves towards the earliest possible conclusion of negotiations on this issue.

With regard to mines other than anti-personnel mines, Croatia still holds the position that these do not present the same humanitarian problem that anti-personnel mines do. They are not deployed in the same quantities as anti-personnel mines and, because of their size and material content, are easier to detect. We support efforts in the framework of the group of experts to make all mines other than anti-personnel mines detectable, as well as to raise the efficiency of self-deactivation/self-neutralization or self-destruction facilities in all mines other than anti-personnel mines, be it through a new or an existing legal instrument.

Croatia also took a further step in regulation of the use of all types of mines by acceding to amended Protocol II CCW Convention, on mines, booby traps and other devices, in early 2002 and will be ready to submit its first report on its national implementation measures in regard to that instrument by the end of 2002. That being said, Croatia naturally considers that, in the case where the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and amended Protocol II of the CCW Convention collide, the more stringent provisions shall apply, which in this case means that the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines shall take precedence.

Lastly, in the field of victim assistance, it should be mentioned that the South-East European Regional Centre for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Landmine Victims, which is situated in the Croatian coastal town of Rovinj, will be operating on a full-time basis by June 2003. The Centre, founded by the Government of Croatia and the Croatian Mine Victim Association, will cater to the needs of mine victims from the entire South-East European region, across national and political boundaries. While the Centre will be geared to children and young adult victims of mines, it will not exclude older mine victims, for whom a special programme will be offered at the Centre while schools are in session and children are unable to come.

The role of the United Nations in increasing international mine-related activities and cooperation remains indisputable, and we are looking forward to the continuing contribution of the world Organization. I can assure the Assembly that Croatia will remain actively engaged in this process.

Mr. Stritt (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): In recent years, there has been significant progress in international mine action. However, the world is far from being rid of this scourge, since millions of anti-personnel mines remain buried in the ground or in stockpiles. Much remains to be done; a world free of anti-personnel mines can be achieved only through the combined efforts of international organizations, Governments and civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), experts and the population directly affected.

Switzerland recognizes the key role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), especially in the fields of policy-making, coordination and advocacy. We also appreciate the valuable contributions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other United Nations agencies in the fight against anti-personnel mines.

Switzerland welcomes the comprehensive and informative report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/57/430). In our view, particular attention should be given to increasing local capacity and national ownership in order to guarantee the sustainability of mine action. Quality control and donor coordination are also crucial. Furthermore, we welcome the United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005. The six strategic goals are very important and require the necessary attention and resources.

Switzerland also welcomes the fact that the United Nations and non-governmental organizations are encouraging States to ratify and comply with existing international instruments on anti-personnel mines. The Ottawa Convention clearly shows how multilateral instruments can make valuable contributions not only to reducing the threat of anti-personnel mines, but also to strengthening peace processes and international security.

Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the complex issue of non-State actors, which continue to produce and use landmines. Progress towards a world free of anti-personnel mines would be promoted if non-State actors renounced the use of those weapons, in keeping with the Ottawa Convention. Therefore, Switzerland urges all non-State actors to renounce the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of all anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the principles and norms of international humanitarian law.

Mine action is one of the priorities of our peace and security policies, as well as of our human security policy. Switzerland, as a member of the Human Security Network, recognizes the common interests and objectives shared by mine action and activities in the broader field of human security. In particular, the efforts of the Human Security Network should be used as an additional instrument for strengthening mine action.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), which Switzerland initiated and largely finances, provides significant support to the United Nations in the form of research and operational assistance. Under an UNMAS mandate, the Geneva Centre has developed international mine action standards and operates the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), which is now in place in nearly 30 countries. The Centre supports implementation of the Ottawa Convention through its implementation support unit, which now plays an irreplaceable role, particularly by serving as an important communication and liaison focal point for all interested actors.

In the field of victim assistance, Switzerland, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Health Organization, UNICEF and Handicap International, has developed a strategic concept that includes not only mine victims, but all victims of violence. Only the integration of victims into the wider context of post-conflict reconstruction and into long-term development cooperation strategies will provide effective and sustainable solutions. That comprehensive approach is widely recognized and is used also by UNMAS and UNDP. The next step is to implement the strategy at the national and regional levels.

In order to strengthen mine action activities worldwide, Switzerland provides financial, human and material resources to United Nations programmes and to qualified non-governmental organizations. With regard to demining and the destruction of stockpiles, in 2002, Switzerland has financed projects or engaged experts in 15 countries, primarily in the Balkans and Africa. In 2003, Switzerland will focus its demining activities on Angola and Mozambique, and additional deployments of personnel are planned in Sri Lanka and Chad. In order to ensure adequate and sustainable human resources in the future, Switzerland has established a pool of demining specialists for

international mission deployment. In addition, Switzerland provides equipment, particularly devices for the contact-free destruction of unexploded ordnance.

In June 2002, Switzerland organized for the second time, in cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, a one-week workshop on the management of national mine destruction programmes. As Co-Chairman of the Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction within the context of the Ottawa Convention, Switzerland will continue to play an active role in that field. The first official deadline for more than 10 States parties to destroy their stockpiles will expire at the end of March 2003. Switzerland will work closely with the other States parties to ensure that that deadline is met and that countries experiencing difficulties in meeting their responsibilities receive assistance and cooperation.

Switzerland welcomes the role that Geneva plays in mine action alongside the complementary role played by New York. Geneva was privileged to have hosted the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, from 16 to 20 September 2002. Switzerland will continue to provide the best possible working conditions for the following intersessional and future meetings of States parties, as well as for the numerous international and non-governmental organizations based in Geneva in order to facilitate the campaign against anti-personnel mines and their severe humanitarian consequences.

Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Central American countries: Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General on his excellent report on this subject, contained in document A/57/430. The progress made in the United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005 is described in the report. We agree with the Secretary-General that this first year of implementation has shown how useful it has been to have a concrete plan with clear goals. The plan has also made it possible to have a more systematic focus on United Nations activities and on achieving greater coherence in all mine action activities.

The most disturbing thing about anti-personnel mines is their indiscriminate and unpredictable impact. Once a mine is placed in a location, it remains active indefinitely, affecting the lives of populations living near the minefields, who suffer the consequences of wars years after they end.

Central America has been the scene of several military conflicts that lasted for many decades and that ended at the beginning of the 1990s. During those wars, one of the preferred weapons often used by official armies and by irregular forces were anti-personnel landmines. Those mines were usually acquired outside the region, although there were also armed insurgent groups that used homemade explosive devices. There were cases in which the minefields were precisely mapped, but there were other cases in which no record of any kind exists. The competent authorities become aware only when mines explode and take their toll in victims, often children, women and the elderly. Anti-personnel mines are usually placed in economic and military installations, such as telecommunications systems, farmland, electric power towers and bridges.

That legacy of armed conflict continues to threaten much of the population of Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua. Many agricultural areas remain fallow, and the population lives with uncertainty with regard to restoring their normal lives. However, economic pressure has often forced people to remain in those areas and to work near the minefields. Thus, the complete elimination of that evil is a task that we Central Americans have undertaken as an urgent need.

In an attempt to resolve the situation just described, in 1991 the Organization of American States decided to implement a project, which later became the Mine-clearing Assistance Programme in Central America (PADCA), with the cooperation of the States members and observers of that organization.

In an effort to deal with all aspects of the problem of anti-personnel mines, the OAS eventually expanded PADCA into the Programme of Integral Action against Anti-Personnel Mines in Central America, which incorporated previous mine clearance activities and serves as a focal point for the organization in all other aspects of mine action. OAS also established a mine registry for the hemisphere and decided to set up new mine clearance programmes in other countries of the Americas where this scourge exists and that request such programmes. Moreover, inter-American bodies have also cooperated in creating educational

programmes aimed at prevention, as well as programmes in the areas of physical and psychological rehabilitation of victims and the socio-economic recovery of demined areas in Central America.

The progress made by PADCA is due largely to the invaluable and generous support of OAS member States such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Peru, the United States and Venezuela, as well as to the contributions of major international donors such as Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

All of our countries are States parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which represents the effort of the international community to completely prohibit these treacherous weapons. All of our countries have also submitted the related reports and updates on the fulfilment of the Convention's provisions, in accordance with article 7. Similarly, none of the countries on whose behalf I am speaking have produced or imported anti-personnel mines in the course of this year.

I would now like to provide a summary of the current situation regarding mines in each of the Central American countries suffering from this evil.

During the long internal war in Guatemala, Government forces did not employ anti-personnel landmines. That is not the case with the Guatemalan Revolutionary Union, which made limited us of home-made mines and improvised explosive devices during the war. As a result, there are still high-risk areas containing unexploded devices in 13 of the country's departments. Volunteer fire brigades are participating in the fight to eradicate these weapons, which includes the efforts of 38 officers gathering information, marking mined areas and educating nearby populations of the dangers of landmines. In addition, the army has been involved in destroying these devices where they are found. In Guatemala we are also making provisions for the complete removal by 2005 of remaining devices from the 13 high-risk departments. We have encountered some difficulties, including rough terrain and poor weather. With regard to providing emergency medical assistance, some sites are only accessible by helicopter during the rainy season. The lack of accurate maps also makes planning difficult. It is estimated that there are still 6,000 unexploded devices in Guatemala. Guatemala has no mines in its arsenal.

With respect to Honduras, combatants in the Nicaraguan civil war laid anti-personnel mines on both sides of the Honduras-Nicaragua border during the 1980s. The departments of Choluteca, El Paraíso, Olancho and Cortés have been found to contain landmines, and all affected areas have been properly marked. The date originally set for demining has been pushed back due to problems related to the weather, harsh terrain and difficulties with emergency medical evacuations. It is hoped that mine removal activities can be completed by December 2002, when the last remaining landmines will be removed along the border between Nicaragua and Choluteca. Honduras has also destroyed its warehoused arsenals of mines.

Costa Rica has never produced, imported, stockpiled or used anti-personnel mines. As in the case of Honduras, the problem of mines on its northern border is due to the fact that mines were laid there by armed forces involved in the Nicaraguan conflict of the 1980s. Due to financial problems, the demining programme has suffered serious setbacks, especially since December 2001. At the moment it has been suspended, pending international assistance. An estimated 1,800 mines remain in the border areas of Pocosol, Upala and La Cruz. Affected areas include the sectors of Los Chiles, Tablitas, Isla Chica, La Trocha, Pocosol, San Isidro and others. Both the Ministry for Public Health and the Ministry for Education have continued their educational campaigns on how to avoid the danger of mines in affected areas.

A national demining programme was carried out by the Government of El Salvador from March 1993 to January 1994, with the participation of the armed forces and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional. The United Nations office in El Salvador, the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provided support for the programme. In the last year, El Salvador's armed forces have carried out several ordnance-removal programmes involving previously undetected devices that had been discovered when persons were injured. El Salvador has no stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

Nicaragua, which is the most heavily mined country in Central America, is believed to have had around 135,000 landmines planted on its territory during the internal conflict that took place from 1979 to 1990. That figure includes both anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. Some 55,000 mines remain to be deactivated in various parts of the territory of Nicaragua. Mine removal in Nicaragua has been the responsibility of the army's corps of engineers, specifically its Small Demining Units, and is being carried out in five areas of operations. Removal has been affected by delays in programming due to unforeseen circumstances, and is expected to be completed by 2005 instead of 2004 as originally planned. On the occasion of the conference on Progress in demining in the Americas, which was held in Managua on 27 and 28 August 2002, the Government of Nicaragua carried out the destruction of the last 18,345 anti-personnel landmines that remained in the country's arsenals out of the original total of 133,425.

The Dominican Republic, Panama and Belize have never used, produced, imported or stockpiled anti-personnel landmines, not even for purposes of training, and are therefore not affected by mines. However, there is landmine contamination in Panama as a result of military and weapons-testing exercises that took place in the Canal Zone in the three decades prior to 1997. UNICEF, the Ministries of Health, Education and Foreign Affairs, and non-governmental organizations, have begun an educational project to raise awareness of unexploded devices located near population centres.

At the conference I just mentioned, vice-ministers from Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador, along with representatives from Colombia, Honduras and Peru, declared the following.

> "We urgently call on friendly countries that comprise the donor community for humanitarian demining, and especially on States parties to the Ottawa Convention, not to abandon or suspend the allocation of resources for countries of the Americas that have not yet completed their demining programmes and integrated mine action programmes".

In addition, they called on international partners to continue and increase technical and financial assistance to countries that have met their commitments to signing, ratifying and implementing their obligations under the Ottawa Convention. They also agreed to refocus efforts on attaining humanitarian goals under the Convention and on international cooperation and assistance.

We hope that every country will cooperate in order to eradicate the problem of mines from the face of the Earth. We also hope that we will one day be able to declare our planet free of anti-personnel mines and other explosive devices with indiscriminate effects.

Mr. Redai (Ethiopia): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on mine action. The report highlights the daunting challenges landmines continue to pose in many parts of the world and the collective efforts under way to mitigate the challenge. In this regard, we are grateful for the central role which the United Nations is playing in assessing the ways and means of minimizing and curbing the impact of landmines around the world and also for its coordination of the efforts of the international community against this menace.

Certainly, the increased international cooperation and coordination on mine action have registered encouraging progress in recent times. However, the challenges ahead remain enormous. As is noted in the Secretary-General's report, landmines continue to be a source of human suffering and hindrance to socio-economic progress in many countries. The availability of over 30 million landmines makes Africa the most heavily mined and the primary victim of these deadly weapons. As a result, conflict-ravaged Africa is left with millions of maimed people who need immediate support.

The impact of landmines in Ethiopia is no less severe than in any other African country. Ethiopia's exposure to the severe problem of landmines, unexploded ordinance and contamination goes back to the Italian invasion in 1936. The level of the challenge was exacerbated by the unprovoked Eritrean aggression against Ethiopia in the 1998-2000 so-called border conflict.

While Ethiopia's large land mass is mostly mined, the northern and north-eastern regions of the country along the border with Eritrea and the south-eastern region are highly exposed. The intensity and wide coverage of these deadly weapons continue to hamper post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, particularly in the North. As a result of the Ethiopian-Eritrean war, over 340,000 persons displaced from border towns and villages are still unable to return to

their homes and to resume normal lives. Landmines are taking their toll. They continue killing, injuring and threatening civilians in those highly infested regions. Between September 2001 and May 2002, 330 civilian casualties and injuries were recorded in that part of the country.

Having recognized the incalculable humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of landmines and unexploded ordinance, the Government of Ethiopia has accorded demining high priority since 1991. It established an Ethiopian demining project in 1995, but its effective demining operation was interrupted following the Ethiopian-Eritrean war. The cessation of hostilities between the two countries with the signing of the Algiers Agreement created an enabling environment for the resumption of the Government's mine-action programme.

The Ethiopian Mine Action Office has been reorganized and effectively operating since February 2001 to address the all-round challenges of mine-related issues. The Ethiopian Mine Action Office is coordinating and executing all national mine-action activities meeting international standards of humanitarian demining.

Sufficient data and information on landmines are prerequisites for a socio-economic Landmine Impact Survey. In Ethiopia, Norwegian Peoples Aid is conducting a landmine survey with assistance from the Survey Action Center — an organization of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation — and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a start-up fund from the Government of Germany. The United Nations Mine Action Service, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund and other United Nations agencies are also engaged in assisting mine-action activities in Ethiopia. The joint United Nations landmine assessment mission to Ethiopia helped in the development of a national capacity for mine action and donors' support therefor.

While my Government is fully committed to making the country a mine-free land, the level of mine contamination and its socio-economic impact limit the Government's capacity to respond to the challenges, and it is in this context that we encourage the international community to increase its present humanitarian demining-capacity support to the desired level. In this spirit, it is critical that the support of the international community for mine-action programmes be enhanced in the areas of training, socio-economic impact surveys, rapid-response teams, mine detection, mine awareness, victim assistance programmes and enhancing the organizational capacity of the Ethiopian Mine Action Office.

In closing, my delegation wishes to seize this opportunity to sincerely thank all donors, the United nation system and the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank, for their unstinting support in our effort to have a mine-free Ethiopia.

Ms. Espíndola (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): The presence of mines in the world has had grave economic and social consequences for people living in affected areas, due to their latent threat to local populations and the consequent impossibility of using broad areas of cultivable land, irrigation canals and roadways. It is increasingly evident that, in order to consolidate peace following a conflict, it is necessary to deal with the tens of millions of mines that remain scattered around various regions.

The existence of mines aroused the concern of the international community, leading to the Ottawa process that culminated in the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, a critical instrument to which Ecuador is party. At the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government urged States to accede to the Convention so as to eliminate the dangers involved in the use of mines.

The United Nations, aware of the grave consequences of the presence of landmines in various parts of the world, the number of innocent victims and the need to confront and resolve this crisis, and as a contribution to world peace, has adopted several measures that Ecuador supports. In this context, I wish on behalf of my delegation to thank the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted to the Assembly. That document describes the progress made by the Organization in the pursuit of the goals proposed under the United Nations Mine Action Strategy.

My delegation concurs with the view that, if the work of the United Nations institutions entrusted with mine action is to be fruitful, it must have clear goals and concrete plans that will allow us to determine the progress made over a specific period of time. At the same time, we consider unacceptable the delay of more than three years in the delivery of funds that donor

countries earmarked for Ecuador through the United Nations Mine Action Service for its demining programmes and to help us move forward towards fulfilling our obligations under the Convention. Moreover, an unjustifiable deduction was made from that cooperation on the basis of so-called administrative expenses, which not only limits our ability to pursue demining activities, but also runs counter to the principles of cooperation and discourages undertakings being arduously carried out by developing countries, such as Ecuador.

My delegation believes that the various mine-related activities should be carried out simultaneously. Eliminating the use of this type of weapon, removing planted mines, warning of dangers to the populations at risk through the distribution of maps and the marking of mined fields, and rehabilitating the victims of accidents caused by mines are all essential activities in dealing with this serious problem affecting various countries of the world.

The international standards for activities relative to mines, prepared for the United Nations International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, are a valuable contribution to strengthening standards, guidelines and the actions taken at the country level. In this context, Ecuador considers that distributing translations of those standards is a high priority.

Ecuador has not escaped the serious situation caused by the presence of this type of weapon. There are still mines in areas along its border with Peru, affecting development in the region.

Ecuador, by virtue of its commitments relative to the Ottawa Convention and through its commitment to its policy of defending international humanitarian law, has completed the destruction of stockpiled mines on 11 September 2001. It has thus complied with the Managua Challenge by carrying out that destruction within four years of the entry into force of the Convention.

With respect to the removal of planted mines, Ecuador has been carrying out intensive work. Considerable areas have been cleared and certified. However, mine removal and clearance efforts in areas of difficult terrain in the southern and eastern provinces are still pending. The nature of such terrain poses great difficulties for access and results in elevated costs and greater risks for mine-action workers.

In order to meet the goal of combating the presence of mines in the country, Ecuador signed an agreement with the Organization of American States. Through their valuable contribution, Canada and the United States, as well as Japan, have contributed to our plans for the destruction and removal of mines carried out in my country.

Cooperation given to the developing countries in this area is essential for continuing demining efforts, destroying anti-personnel mines and assisting victims. Ecuador makes a special appeal to those countries able to offer such assistance, since the urgent economic and social needs faced by developing countries prevent them from allocating greater resources to mine-related actions.

Despite those limitations, Ecuador is determined to firmly continue this process. My country has reiterated its commitment to continuing those efforts at the regional and multilateral levels. In this context, we should mention the Declaration of the South American zone of peace and cooperation, which was approved at the Second Meeting of Presidents of South America, held in Guayaquil last July, as well as the commitment to contribute to making the Western Hemisphere a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

In May and June of this year, the Demining Centre of Ecuador (CENDESMI), responsible for coordinating these efforts in my country, carried out educational campaigns among the population in areas affected by the presence of mines, in particular, in areas used for agriculture and commerce. Nonetheless, funding is needed to continue those efforts. CENDESMI hopes to convert the centre for mine clearance training, operated by the Army Corps of Engineers, into an international demining school. The varied topography of Ecuador, combined with the experience accumulated by Ecuadorian demining personnel over several years of systematic work, enables us to train sappers to carry out these tasks in varied terrain.

Allow me to appeal to the international community to make the Ottawa Convention a universal instrument. Mine clearance is a humanitarian activity that seeks to restore hope and dignity to the persons and populations affected. Its objective is to recover the mined lands and to develop them for the benefit of those people. The conscious, responsible and

permanent effort and cooperation of the international community are required to achieve that goal.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 28. The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 28.

The meeting rose at 12.06 p.m.